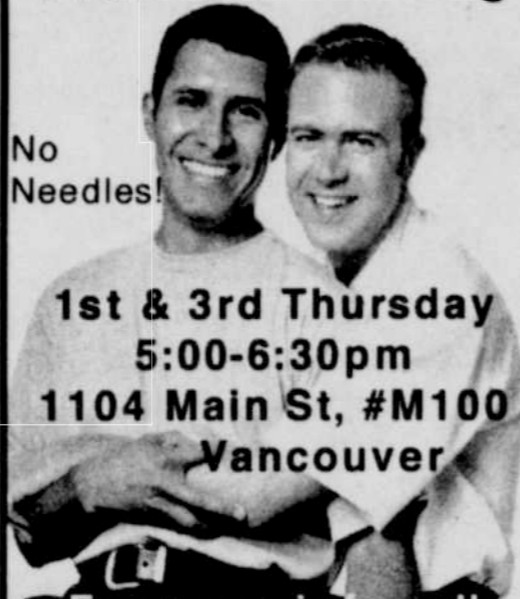


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Speak out

Aid research

TO THE EDITOR:

In this time of terrible destruction and great loss, the American community comes together in support and aid. The many factions of our society work together much as the passengers of United Airlines Flight 93, including at least one gay man, are believed to have banded together to take back the plane and, in doing so, heroically prevented it from hitting a populated target.

As in any time of great devastation, our community needs to give financially. I ask everyone to remember those members of our gay, lesbian, bi and trans family who have perished by giving prudently as well.

Remember the Red Cross will not let gay or bisexual men donate blood no matter how dire the need.

Remember the Salvation Army asked for, and received, special protection for religious organizations exempting them from any nondiscrimination policy based on sexual orientation in President Bush's plan to involve religious agencies in social services.

Remember the United Way supports the ban on gay Boy Scouts and troop leaders by continuing to contribute financially to chapters across the country, including New York and Washington, D.C.

It is important, even imperative, to let these organizations know that when they ask our community for dollars to support their programs, they are asking us to contribute financially to our discrimination. We should not taint the memories of our murdered gay, lesbian, bi and trans friends by financially donating to any charity with a policy of discrimination against us.

If you already have contributed financially to the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way of America September 11th Fund or another selectively supportive service organization, I encourage you to let them know how much money they received from someone they discriminate against. Perhaps now is the time to open their hearts and policies; otherwise, encourage them to return your donation to you, then forward that same amount, or more, to a nondiscriminatory charity.

Of the charities listed at Helping.org for this special time of need, the New York Firefighters 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund and the New York State Fraternal Order of Police World Trade Center Fund stem from organizations that do not discriminate in employment or benefits regarding an individual's sexual orientation. (The AOL Time Warner Foundation—also nondiscriminatory—is covering administrative costs associated with contributing online so 100 percent of your donation is directed to the charity.) You also could do a search at Helping.org to find gay, lesbian, bi and trans organizations in New York and Washington to which you can donate.

And at this time of great tragedy—as I mourn my friend who worked on the 90th floor and my boyfriend's colleague who was a passenger on the plane that struck that tower—please give a bit more. At this time of great compassion, please remember also to be careful as well as caring.

J GRAIGORY
 McMinnville

New patriotism

TO THE EDITOR:

Although I do not wish to detract from the righteous grieving of those who have lost family and other loved ones in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, I do feel a gaping abyss between myself and others

"like me" and those who have "come together" to "renew the spirit of America" so we are now a "stronger nation."

I am unclear which America this is. The America that for years has made me angry and afraid with words like "faggot"? That America?

The America of religious freedom whose government makes public display of participating in a Catholic ritual? The America most commonly referred to as a "Christian nation"?

The great melting pot that marginalizes those who don't fit neatly into the mainstream, whose citizens live in fear and wariness of each other but now unite under one banner to rise against a common enemy? Now we're all Americans again!

Honestly, I am torn. A part of me grieves. Undoubtedly whites, blacks, Hispanics, gays, lesbians, Catholics, Jews and, yes, probably even Muslims were killed in the recent unfortunate events. Another part of me is satisfied to see the America I was never a part of suffer in a way I have lived with for years.

Truly it is pathetic that while we see waving flags and tear-filled eyes and get our ears filled with buzzwords like "new patriotism," "stronger nation" and "Americans coming together," threats are being phoned to mosques, Muslims and other Arab Americans. I am not filled with renewed patriotism for a country where it has been made clear that I am tolerated and abhorred in the same moment.

JOE AYERS
 Portland

Surprise attack?

TO THE EDITOR:

The Sept. 11 attack should have come as no surprise. The United States is a high-profile country and an open society with unsecured borders and poor immigration control.

Getting vengeance will be difficult, as underground warfare is very effective. A police state would stop this, but we won't tolerate one.

RALPH RAINES
 Gaston

Eradicating hatred

TO THE EDITOR:

We were stunned and saddened to hear of the slaying of the young trans woman, Loni Okaruru, in Hillsboro.

It is extremely disturbing that such gruesome, senseless actions have become commonplace in our society. It is nearly impossible to pick up a newspaper or turn on the evening news without hearing of yet another instance of human shortcoming in its most despicable form—violence.

How many of us will have to die before we as a community, we as a society, we as a nation decide to say, "Never again"? How many more Loni Okarurus, Matthew Shepards and Brandon Teenas will have their lives torn from them before we take a stand for solidarity? To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice against one is injustice against all."

Organizing for justice is central to our mission at the Lesbian Community Project. We believe that as individuals and as a society we all are diminished by such heinous acts of degradation, and we are committed to the struggle to eradicate hatred and violence from our state. We respect and honor the life of Loni Okaruru by striving to build a community in which no trans, lesbian or gay person has to suffer at the hand of ignorance and intolerance.

ANNIE OTIS
 Lesbian Community Project Treasurer